

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 01623 092258Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----042664 092314Z /65
O 091810Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8396

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E. . 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: OGEN, CI
SUBJECT: LETELIER/MOFFITT CASE: ALLEGED VERSION FROM MICHAEL
TOWNLEY

1. SUMMARY: A SOURCE CLOSE TO TOWNLEY'S WIFE SAYS HE SAW
TOWNLEY IN SANTIAGO MARCH 5. THE TOWNLEYS ALLEGE THAT TOWNLEY
AND HIS ACCOMPLICE "ROMERAL" DID TRY TO GET US VISAS ON PARAGUAYAN
PASSPORTS IN ORDER TO SWEEP CHILEAN EMBASSY AND/OREBUG ANTI-GOC
ORGANIZATIONS BUT WERE CALLED OFF MISSION AFTER THEY HAD VISA
PROBLEMS. "ROMERAL" (AKA ARMANDO NFI) SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD TOWNLY
THAT TWO OTHERS, USING SAME FALSE NAMES, EVENTUALLY MADE TRIP
TO U.S. TOWNLEY BECAME FRIGHTENED WHEN HIS PICTURE APPEARED IN
NEWSPAPERS AND HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH "ARMANDO", WHO SAYS HE
SPOKE WITH FBI AGENT FROM BUENOS AIRES DURING FIRST WEEK OF MARCH.
TOWNLEY AND WIFE BELIEVE THOSE ACTUALLY TRAVELING WERE NAMED
CACHO RIVERA (OR ACEVEDO) AND ROLANDO RIVADEINEIRA.
ACCORDING TO THE TOWNLEYS, AT LEAST ONE OF PAIR IS ON PINOCHET'S
BODYGUARD UNIT. TOWNLEY BLAMES CUBAN EXILES FOR IDENTIFYING
HIM SINCE THEY THINK TOWNLEY FINGERED RAFAEL OTERO BEFORE THE
1976 KISSINGER VISIT TO CHILE. END SUMMARY

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2. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FROM A CHILEAN JOURNALIST WAS
RELATED TO AN USIS OFFICER. THE JOURNALIST CLAIMS TO HAVE OBTAINED
THE INFORMATION FROM THE TOWNLEY'S ON MARCH 5. WE THINK HE IS
REPORTING ACCURATELY.

3. ACCORDING TO TOWNLEY, SOMETIME IN 1976 THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

DIRECTORATE (DINA NOW RENAMED CNI) ASKED HIM TO DO A JOB FOR THE CHILEAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. MS. GOWNLEY SAID THAT HE WAS TO PERFORM AN ELECTRONIC SWEEP AND PERHAPS BUG ANTI-JUNTA ORGANIZATIONS. SHE ADDED THAT ANOTHER TELECOMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST "ROMERAL" WAS ASSIGNED TO GO WITH HIM. (SHE REFUSED TO GIVE HIS TRUE NAME BUT SOMETIMES REFERRED TO HIM AS "ARMANDO", AN ARMY OFFICER WHOM TOWNLEY PROBABLY MET THROUGH HIS PATRIA Y LIBERTAD CONTACTS).

4. TOWNLEY TOLD SOURCE THAT HE WAS NOT WILLING TO GO TO THE US ON HIS AMERICAN PASSPORT AND HAD HAD TROUBLE REGULARIZING HIS STATUS HERE. DINA DECIDED THEY SHOULD GO THROUGH PARAGUAY AND ARRANGED WITH THE PARAGUAYANS HERE FOR PARAGUAYAN PASSPORTS. AT ASUNCION, THE PAIR APPLIED FOR US VISAS. THE INTERVIEWING OFFICER HAD FOLDERS ON EACH OF THEM. WHEN THE CONSULAR OFFICER LEFT THE DESK TO ANSWER THE PHONE, TOWNLEY LOOKED IN THE FOLDER AND SAW THE WORDS "C/O CIA". THEIR VISAS "WERE REJECTED". DINA THEN INSTRUCTED THE DUE TO RETURN TO SANTIAGO.

5. SOME TIME LATER, ACCORDING TO MS. TOWNLEY, "ARMANDO" MET TOWNLEY AND TOLD HIM "TWO GUYS GOT OUR TRIP AND USED THE SAME NAMES WE WERE GOING TO USE". THUS NEITHER TOWNLEY NOR "ARMANDO" WENT TO THE STATES. MS. TOWNLEY WAS RELUCTANT TO IDENTIFY THE TWO PERSONS WHO ACTUALLY TRAVELLED. NEITHER BELIEVE THAT PRESIDENT PINOCHET WAS INVOLVED IN THE CASE AND ARE CONCERNED THAT HE WILL BE LINKED TO IT SINCE ONE OF THE ACTUAL TRAVELERS WORKS ON
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PINOCHET'S BODYGUARD SQUAD. NEVERTHELESS, MS. TOWNLEY BELIEVES THAT THE GOC WILL PRODUCE THE REAL TRAVELERS BASED ON ASSURANCES GIVEN HER BY "SOMEONE" IN THE GOC. IF, HOWEVER, THE GOC DOES NOT PRODUCE THE TRAVELERS SHE WILL BE FORCED TO GO PUBLIC. EVENTUALLY SHE IDENTIFIED THE TRAVELERS AS "CACHO RIVERA OR CACHO ACEVEDO", BEIEVED TO BE A SPECIAL SERVICES MAN, AND ROLANDO RIVADEINEIRA (SOURCE SAYS MR. TOWNLEY CALLED NEXT DAY TO SAY "ONE OF THE NAMES IS WRONG", BUT DID NOT SPECIFY WHICH.)

6. ACCORDING TO MS. TOWNLEY, TOWNLEY BECAME CONCERNED WHEN HIS PHOTO APPEARED IN THE PRESS. HE THINKS THAT CUBAN EXILES INFORMED THE PRESS OF HIS TRUE NAME IN REVENGE FOR HIS ROLE IN FINGERING AS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS A CUBAN EXILE RESIDING IN CHILE. TOWNLEY CLAIMS TO HAVE GOTTEN INVOLVED WITH THE CUBAN EXILES DURING HIS SOJOURN IN THE MIAMI AREA IN 1973. HE SAYS PRIOR TO THE 1976 KISSINGER VISIT, HE WAS INTERVIEWED BY AGENTS (NOT IDENTIFIED) AND DESCRIBED THEHRESIDENT EXILE AS A POTENTIAL THREAT TO KISSINGER. THE EXILE WAS SENT TO MIAMI "AND GIVEN A 99 YEAR JAIL SENTENCE."
(EMBASSY COMMENT: THIS APPEARS TO BE A REFERENCE TO RAFAEL OTERO.)

7. ACCORDINT TO MS. TOWNLEY, TOWNLEY MAINTIANS CONTACT WITH "ARMANDO" (THE PERSON WHOSE PHOTO HAS BEEN CIRCULATING) AND ARMANDO

RECENTLY TOLD TOWNLEY THAT HE HAD SPOKEN WITH "AN FBI AGENT
FROM BUENOS AIRES LAST WEEK".

8. AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT: THE STATEMENTS MADE BY TOWNLEY
REGARDING HIS APPLICATION (PARA 4) FOR A PARAGUAYAN PASSPORT
IS SHEER FABRICATION. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THE PAIR NEVER CAME
TO THE EMBASSY AND REQUEST FOR VISAS WAS MADE THROUGH THE PARAGUAYAN
FOREIGN OFFICE, WHICH PRESENTED OFFICIAL PARAGUAYAN PASSPORTS
AND TRANSMITTAL LETTER. IT IS NOT CERTAIN THAT THE PAIR
EVER TRAVELLED TO PARAGUAY AND I BELIEVE THE GOP MAY HAAVE
ACTED UPON AN OFFICIAL TELEPHONE REQUEST FROM CHILE. IN
VIEW OF THE OUTRIGHT LIE, IT IS QUESTIONABLE HOW MUCH OF THE
REST OF THE TOWNLEYS' STORY IS TRUTHFUL.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SANTIA01623
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X4
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780107-0050
Format: TEL
From: SANTIAGO
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780387/aaaacvtl.tel
Line Count: 136
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d16c4cca-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 aug 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3386224
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LETELIER/MOFFITT CASE: ALLEGED VERSION FROM MICHAEL TOWNLEY
TAGS: OGEN, CI
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d16c4cca-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014